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ABSTRACT

Child care and early education have been acclaimed by advocates in Great Britain and the United States as the key to economic and academic success, the basis for social justice and equality, a business opportunity, and the remedy for poverty, welfare dependency, crime, and educational failure. This book examines the research basis for these claims, arguing that it is necessary to examine research on types of child care actually used, and maintains that this research suggests that when compared with children cared for at home, children in child care may be disadvantaged in educational performance, behavior, and attachment to their mothers. Section A of the book details the characteristics of good caregiving and reviews research examining the effects of child care on children. Section B examines the characteristics of child care and after-school care actually used. Section C discusses the use of "educare" to describe child care and early education programs, questions benefits received from long periods in formal school situations at early ages, and shows how the Perry Preschool Project has become the principal finding reported by child care lobbyists. Section D looks at the impact on the whole family of policies seeking to push both parents to work while children are placed in third-party care, focusing on attachment, pressures on dual-career couples, maternal guilt and depression, fathers' role, and long-term effects of maternal employment. Section E considers public policy implications and concludes by asking if supporting only child care out of the home is either fair or in the best interests of families, children, and society. Each chapter contains references. (Author/KB)